As I Recall Them

CHARLES NETTLETON STREVELL

Foreword

Since retiring from active business, there has been more or less of an opportunity to "recall" incidents and stories, most of which have come to my knowledge during my life in the West.

Originally, I had thought that the stories concerning noted western characters, some of which I have told from one coast to the other, and of which my friends have said, "You are the only one now living actually knowing of these incidents, and it seems they should be preserved."

Having in mind Noble Warrum's *Tribune* editorials and his book "Forced Landings" and, since receiving the latest book of President Heber J. Grant (President of the L. D. S. Church) and also Russel L. Tracy's, the idea has grown and it now seems worth while to put into printed form such of these stories, incidents, and experiences that I am able to recall from memory . . . no notes or memoranda have ever been made. I have been told that if there is any humor in a story, I am quite apt to detect it. Having in mind "A little nonsense now and then is relished by the wisest men," I have included various stories in which I think there is a vein of humor.

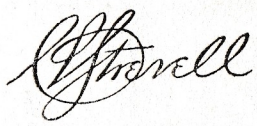
I have been told by other elderly persons that they find it easier to recall events happening many years ago and that they come with greater force and clarity than events in recent years.

The introduction, written by my friend of many years standing, Noble Warrum, Sr., editorial writer on *The Salt Lake Tribune,* is a distinct addition to the book. I feel sure he would not have written this

unless he thought that the stories or incidents might be of interest to our mutual friends.

I have no illusions as to the literary merit of the book or an ambition to be known as a raconteur, but trust that, in view of our friendship, you will not be too critical but will get some pleasure in reading the stories herewith given.

For my friends I hope that in their old age they may have peace of mind, health, comfort, and happiness.



Introduction

NOBLE WARRUM, SR.
Editorial Writer,
"The Salt Lake Tribune"

Those who peruse these interesting memoirs of a modest but active participant in six decades of western development will become acquainted, to some extent, with a man who deserves to be remembered. The writer of this introduction has known and honored for almost a half century the able and unassuming author of the volume.

Beginning with Abraham Lincoln, upon whose knee he sat as a child, Charles Nettleton Strevell has retained and recorded impressions of many characters of the middle west and the far west, people he met while following the star of his destiny from an Illinois town to a state he helped create in the intermountain region.

Charles Nettleton Strevell was a fellow member of the constitutional convention of 1895—the body that framed the fundamental law of Utah in conformity with requirements of the Enabling Act of Congress. As a studious, conscientious, dignified and attentive delegate, he was influential in his sincerity and simplicity of expression and demeanor and won the friendship and confidence of all his colleagues.

As any reader of these memoirs may ascertain, Mr. Strevell engaged in diverse and divergent lines of endeavor—but the text fails to show that he was successful in all of them. As a page for the governor of Illinois when Grant was president of the republic; as a homesteader in Montana where he had gone for his health; as a merchant in Miles City during an

epoch of frontier turbulence; as a dealer in wholesale and retail hardware in Ogden and Salt Lake City; as an amateur archaeologist and life-long collector of historical and geological curios; as a philanthropic citizen of the state and nation, Charles Nettleton Strevell is worthy and well qualified to recall picturesque personalities and recount unusual episodes identified with that dramatic period of colonization already known as the "Old West"—an epoch of excitement and achievement fast fading into the haze of romantic tradition.

Unless preserved by the patient, painstaking hands of reliable and sympathetic chroniclers like Mr. Strevell, many incidents and characters of other days might be forgotten altogether or lack verification if related or described under other circumstances. But the author of these reminiscences has seen with his own eyes, heard with his own ears and experienced in his own life, the tragedies and comedies of which he writes.

Towns and mining camps have been named for him; a flourishing business in Salt Lake City still bears his name, although he long since retired from participation in its affairs; a museum of art, curios, fossils and historical relics, collected and donated by Mr. Strevell is now the property of the public schools of Salt Lake City—dedicated to the memory of an only child, a son who died many years ago.

At the time this introduction is written, Mr. Strevell may be seen upon the streets, as dignified and sprightly as ever, immaculately groomed and dressed, amiable and easily approached, calm and kindly disposed—one of the most optimistic conservatives to be met in a life time.

Noble Warrum, Jr.

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Charles N. Strevell

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Forrest S. Walden—Vice-President-Secretary, Strevell-Paterson Hardware Company

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Walker Bank Building, Salt Lake City, Utah

Walker Bank Directors first meeting in the new building

Dinosauropodes—Largest known Dinosaur; footprint cast, 4½′ long; width of trackway, 3′6″; length of step, 12 feet. Found in Utah. Now in Strevell Museum.

Entrance to Strevell Museum, Lafayette School, Salt Lake City.

Monument or pavilion in Memory Park, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Bronze Tablet in Museum

Abraham Lincoln

In January, 1860, Abraham Lincoln delivered a lecture in the old home town, Pontiac, Illinois, his subject being "The Wheel and Axle." He was entertained at our home during the night and ate at our table. I have been told that at this time I sat on Lincoln's knee. I was about two years old. After the lecture and following the reception, Mr. Lincoln and father were visiting and the question of height came up. Mr. Lincoln stood beside a door and asked that his height be measured. My father measured his height, six feet four inches, and cut a notch showing it. I have the door casing in the collection of Lincolniana now in the Strevell Museum. After securing it, I wrote father for his recollections of this incident and his reply follows:

LINCOLN'S HEIGHT—6'4"

"Miles City, Montana
March 21, 1901.

"Dear Charles:

"I send you today, such recollections as I have, connected with my measuring the height of Mr. Lincoln. You tell me that you took off the door casing and that you have it. It is certainly an interesting relic.

"The incidents connected with my measuring Mr. Lincoln's height were about as follows:

"The young men of Pontiac, Illinois, in the winter before Mr. Lincoln was nominated for president, had undertaken to maintain a lecture course which was much more in vogue then, than now. Among the lecturers secured, was Mr. Lincoln.

"I introduced him to a very large audience, and, before introducing him, I asked him what subject I should announce for his lecture and he replied 'The Wheel and Axle.' That lecture, though one of the most interesting that I ever heard before or since, was never found in his papers; it was a written lecture, but no trace of it was ever obtained after his death.

"He was entertained at our house during the night and, after the lecture, there was a general reception, a large number of citizens of the town calling upon him during the evening. After the reception had closed and all of our family except Mr. Lincoln and myself retired, he and I sat up until about twelve o'clock, in conversation, a great deal of which I could repeat here, but it is not necessary to do so.

"I do not know, nor have I been able to remember at all, what incident it was brought up the subject of his height. He said that he was six feet four; I told him that it scarcely seemed possible to me that he was four inches taller than myself.

"I am just six feet. 'But at all events,' he said, 'you can take my height if you wish'; and I did so, he standing with his back to the door-casing which you now have, and I taking the measure with great caution, I think with a two foot rule. I remember very distinctly when I was placing the rule on top of his head to get as near a perfect level as I could, noticing

Abraham Lincoln
Sixteenth President of the United States

how heavy and coarse his black hair was. He had a heavy head of hair and it was very coarse and black.

"The measure was taken in his stocking feet; he had some time previous to that, 'pulled off his boots,' and he proved to be just the height you will find on the door casing, which I think is exactly six feet four. If you should be at all interested in any portion of the conversation I had with him that evening, I can give you a sample of it.

"The time of which I am speaking was in the troublous days of slavery and anti-slavery, and one portion of the country was in sentiment entirely arrayed against the other, the North against the South, and the heated condition of the public mind soon eventuated in the clash of arms between the North and the South.

"Our conversation was largely upon this subject. I said to him, 'I believe you will be nominated for president at the approaching convention in Chicago.' I did not know then, what his brother-in-law, Mr. Smith afterwards told me was true, that he did not like to have anyone say to him that he would be nominated; I suppose that it was upon the ground that there was a great deal of that talk which he himself regarded as flippant and much of it said, perhaps, with a mere idea to please him. This he did not like. In answer he asked me with a rather stern countenance why I said that.

"I soon gave him proof that I did not say it without what I regarded as a good reason for doing so; he and Douglas had their joint debate two years before. I said to him, 'Douglas will be nominated at Balti-

more and the people will never be satisfied until you and he have had this contest out on a broader field than the one in which you were engaged in your joint debate.' This was a conviction of mine, and I think it immediately addressed itself to him as a conviction.

" 'Well,' he said, 'what you say of Mr. Douglas being nominated at Baltimore may be true, and it may not, but I can tell you one thing, he will not be nominated at Baltimore without a great fight.' The event proved how much better he understood the situation than I did. The convention at Baltimore resulted in a tremendous fight and a split, but he said, 'Even if what you say should turn out to be true, I do not see how that would necessitate my nomination as you seem to think.'

"He then said, which his brother-in-law, Mr. Smith, stated to me afterwards was probably as much as he ever said to anyone, 'I have thought that I might be named for the second place on the ticket but not for anything higher.'

"In talking in relation to this matter as he had presented it, I asked him who would, in his judgment, be nominated. He said, 'I think Mr. Seward will be nominated.' His prediction that Seward would be nominated would have proven to be entirely true had it not been for Horace Greeley who went into the convention as an alternate from one of the western territories.

"I often met Mr. Lincoln during my residence in Illinois and had many conversations with him in relation to professional and political subjects. I was a member of a state Republican convention in which it

was decided unanimously to present his name at Chicago.

"I never saw Mr. Lincoln alive after his election, but your mother and myself received an autographed letter written entirely in his own hand urging us to visit him at the White House, but that visit was never made.

Yours,

(Signed) J. W. Strevell."

LINCOLNIANA COLLECTION

In the collection, Lincolniana, are several other items of interest. There are photographs of Mr. Lincoln: the celebrated one taken by Brady, of which Mr. Lincoln said, that it made him look more like a human being than others taken previous to this time, and added that he thought this photograph was largely responsible for his election as president; two photographs of Lincoln and his son Tad; photographs of Lincoln's statues, including St. Gauden's in Lincoln Park, Chicago, Illinois; and photographs of the Lincoln Memorial at Springfield, Illinois, and of the great Memorial in Washington, D. C., which is an eternal inspiration to the youth of America. There is a photograph of Lincoln's home at Springfield, his horse and his dog, all of which I secured at Springfield as a boy of ten, while acting as page for Lieutenant Governor Daugherty.

There is also a photograph of Lincoln's War Cabinet. In addition to the President in this photograph are William H. Seward, Secretary of State; E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War; Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy; Edward Bates, Attorney General;

S. P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury; C. B. Smith, Secretary of the Interior; Montgomery Blair, Postmaster General.

LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

In addition to the other Lincolniana, there is a section of the Linden tree under which Lincoln and Douglas debated at Quincy, Illinois in 1858. The authenticity of this souvenir is certified to by the following letter from the mayor of Quincy, Illinois:

"Quincy, Illinois
April 8, 1932

Mr. C. N. Strevell
Bransford Apartments
Salt Lake City, Utah

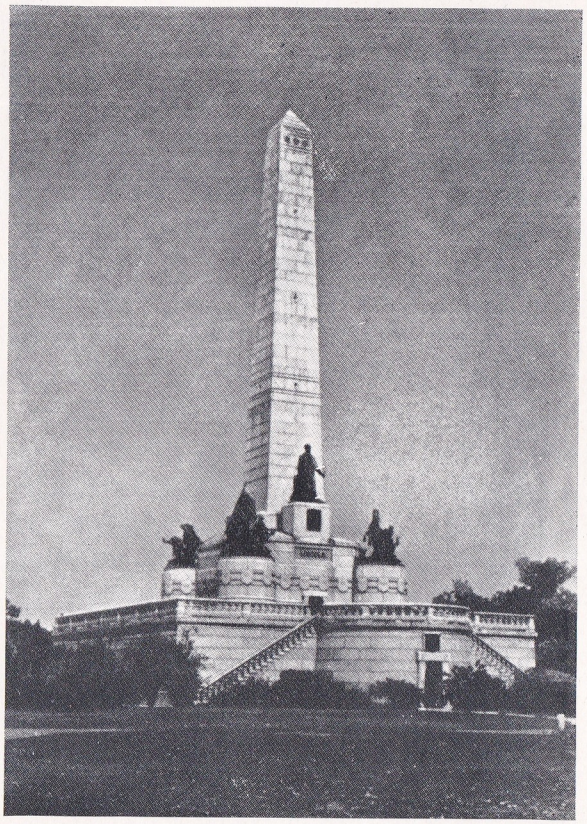
Dear Mr. Strevell:

As per your request, we are sending you, under separate cover, a piece of the famous Lincoln-Douglas Linden tree as a souvenir and trust that you will cherish the same and preserve it as a souvenir of the event which took place under that tree.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) J. Emmett Wilson
Mayor of Quincy."

SPRINGFIELD MONUMENT

In a shadow box, there are two pieces of granite, one rough, the other polished. As a boy of ten, I was watching the men at work building the Lincoln Tomb. Those are pieces of the granite used in building this Memorial. There is also, in the collection, a photograph of the original Lincoln monument and a



Lincoln's Tomb and Monument
Springfield, Illinois

steel engraved copy of the famous letter to Mrs. Bixby which reads as follows:

"Executive Mansion
Washington, Nov. 21, 1864

To Mrs. Bixby
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Madam:

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming, but I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the ranks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

(Signed) Abraham Lincoln"

LET THEM ALONE

There is a free hand sketch of Lincoln by Bill Fleming and a quotation which reads as follows:

"Abraham Lincoln in 1860—compared Utah
To a Green Hemlock Log on a Newly
Cleared Frontier Farm—
Too Heavy to Move!

Too Knotty to Split!
Too Wet to Burn!"

When asked what he expected to do with the "Mormons," he said, "I propose to let them alone."

Following is a copy of Lincoln's autobiography written at the request of Jesse W. Fell, the noted tree planter of northern Illinois, and bequeathed to the Honorable Herbert Hoover, upon the death of Mr. Fell's daughter. The original, which was kept in a bank vault in Normal, Illinois, prior to its presentation to Mr. Hoover, will presumably be transferred to Leland Stanford, Jr., University of Palo Alto, California.

FELL'S LETTER TO LINCOLN

Following is a copy of Mr. Fell's letter asking Lincoln for a brief history of his early life:

"In presenting to the public a facsimile of Abraham Lincoln's autobiography, it is due to the memory of that great man that a brief statement be made of the circumstances under which it was written. In the autumn of 1858, during the celebrated discussion between Senator Douglas and Mr. Lincoln, I had occasion to travel in the middle and eastern states, and finding there a laudable curiosity to learn something more of the latter than was then generally known, and looking too, to the possibility of his becoming an available candidate for the presidency in 1860, I applied to him for a brief history of his early life.

"After repeated efforts on my part, in December, 1859, he placed in my hands a manuscript, of which the following is a copy, written with that freedom and unreserve which one friend would exercise in talking to another, and in which his peculiar conversational style is so happily set forth.

"I need scarcely add that this simple unadorned statement of his was not intended for publication, but merely to give a few facts relating to his early history.

Normal, Illinois.
March 20, 1872. (Signed) Jesse W. Fell."

LINCOLN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

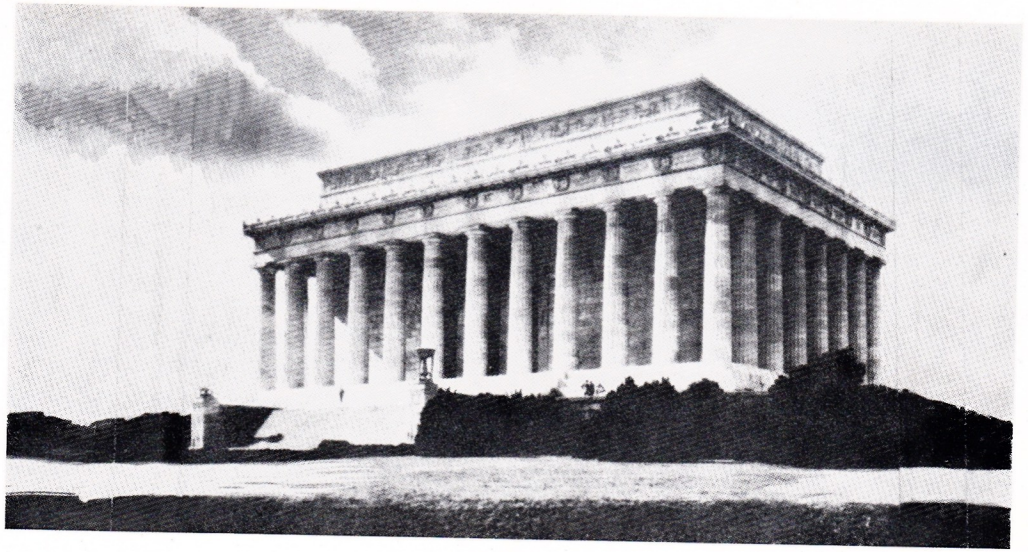
"I was born February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families—second families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks. My paternal grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham County, Virginia, to Kentucky about 1781 or 1782, where, a year or two later, he was killed by the Indians, not in battle, but by stealth, when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest.

"My father (Thomas Lincoln) at the death of his father was but six years of age. By the early death of his mother, he was even in childhood, a wandering, laboring boy, and grew up literally without education. He never did more in the way of writing than bunglingly to write his own name. He removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer County, Indiana,

in my eighth year. It was a wild region, with many bears and other animals still in the woods. There were some schools, so-called, but no qualification was ever required of a teacher beyond 'readin', writin', and cipherin' ' to the rule of three. If a straggler supposed to understand Latin happened to sojourn in the neighborhood he was looked upon as a wizard. Of course, when I came of age I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three. But that was all. The little advance I now have upon this store of education I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity.

"I was raised to farm work till I was twenty-two. At twenty-one I came to Illinois—Macon County. Then I got to New Salem, where I remained a year as a sort of clerk in a store. Then came the Black Hawk war; and I was elected captain of a volunteer company, a success that gave me more pleasure than any I have had since. I went into the campaign—was elected—ran for the Legislature the same year (1832), and was beaten—the only time I ever have been beaten by the people. The next, and three succeeding biennial elections, I was elected to the Legislature. I was not a candidate afterward. During the legislative period I had studied law and removed to Springfield to practice it. In 1846 I was elected to the lower house of Congress. Was not a candidate for re-election. From 1849 to 1854, inclusive, practiced law more assiduously than ever before.

"Always a Whig in politics, and generally on the Whig electoral tickets, making active canvasses. I



Lincoln Memorial
Washington, D. C.

was losing interest in politics when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused me again.

"If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said that I am in height, six feet four inches, nearly; lean in flesh, weighing on an average one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with coarse black hair and gray eyes. No other marks or brands recollected.

A. Lincoln."

LINCOLN IN HISTORY

In response to a request to my father for information concerning Lincoln, to be used as the basis of an address to be given at the annual meeting of the Lincoln Club at Ogden, Utah, February 12, 1896, I received the following letter:

"Mr. Lincoln is one of the characters that will grow in history as long as the human race endures. The world has produced a great number of smart men, but its truly great ones can almost be counted on your fingers. Hannibal, Caesar, Alexander, Cicero and Demosthenes are the names around which ancient history revolves.

"Back of them, and still more ancient, Abraham and Moses and a few names like these illuminate the early history by great deeds done, more than by words spoken. Often, the two elements, words and deeds, combine in the same character and carry the person on to the topmost round of fame.

"In modern times, in our own history, there are a few names whose lustre time will not dim and who, through the ages, will be as bright as any we record upon the scroll of fame.

"Washington is destined to deathless memory. The name of Lincoln will live in the memory and hearts of men as long as the human race endures. In every character there is much that is peculiar, much that is apart from the common lot.

"This was peculiarly true of Lincoln. Scarcely any other character is so conspicuous in the history of the race. Moses did indeed keep the flocks of his father-in-law in San Jethro, but long before this humble life he had been a student of the arts in the court of the Egyptian with whose monarch he was later to contend.

"Lincoln rose from the very depths of poverty, without adventitious birth, unaided and alone, but by divine wisdom, to be the absolute master of destiny. It is said that he who saves a nation is greater than he who founds a nation. But where is the other name who saved both a nation of oppressors and the people oppressed? To those who knew Mr. Lincoln there was much about him that was unlike other men.

"He often jested with the lip when at the same time he was pained with sadness at the heart. It would be useless to undertake to analyze his greatness or to attempt to find out in what it consisted. Like a mountain, he stood alone and when conviction had fastened upon him, it was just as availing to attempt to remove the mountain as him. I doubt if he ever acted in any great matter till convinced, and fully convinced that he was right.

"His nature was deeply sympathetic. Douglas, in their joint debates, in 1858, often said in his addresses

that he cared not whether slavery was voted up or voted down, but every groan of unrequited toil pierced Lincoln's heart. He remembered those who were bound, as being bound with them.

"It has been said by both Herndon and Lammon, who were biographers of Mr. Lincoln, and both of whom I knew well, that Mr. Lincoln was, in religious sentiment, an infidel. I think from all I know that this was true of his early life, but nothing could be farther from the truth in his later life. I suppose without any assumption or arrogance that I know as much on that subject and as to when and how his mind was changed as any one now living and if any time your club should be interested in the matter I will write it for you. At present I have written quite enough.

(Signed) J. W. Strevell."

All of the above items of Lincolniana which have been gathered during the years have been given to the Museum and are now available for those interested in Lincoln and mementoes of him.

THE NEW YORK HERALD, APRIL 15, 1865

In addition to those in the Museum proper, in my own personal collection there are several items including a full page of "The New York Herald" published April 15, 1865, the morning after the assassination of President Lincoln.

There are two interesting booklets regarding Lincoln written by Mrs. R. S. Andrews: "The Perfect Tribute" has become a classic narrative about Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. "The Counsel Assigned"

is an account of Lincoln's defending and securing the acquittal of a boy charged with murder.

There are also various memorial addresses which were delivered on the anniversaries of Lincoln's birthdays by these well-known men:

Henry Watterson, the famous editor of the Louisville "Courier-Journal"; Chancey M. Depew, president of the Vanderbilt Railroads and a leading Republican; Rufus Choate, a leading American lawyer, orator, and statesman; Carl Schurz, a German-American general, statesman, and journalist; and Judge C. C. Goodwin, for many years editor of "The Salt Lake Tribune," and whose addresses about Lincoln certainly rank with those mentioned above.

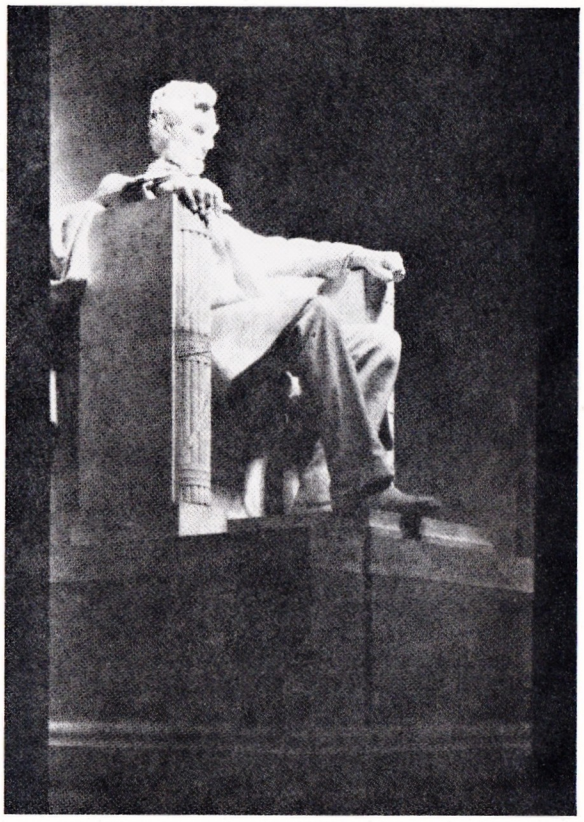
LINCOLN'S TOMB

There is an invitation to attend the dedication services of the Lincoln Memorial which reads as follows:

"The Governor and The General Assembly of the State of Illinois extend to you a cordial invitation to join with the President of the United States in doing honor to the memory of Illinois' martyred President at the ceremonies attending the dedication of the Remodelled Tomb of Abraham Lincoln, Springfield, on Wednesday, June seventeenth, nineteen hundred thirty-one at two-thirty P. M."

LINCOLN DINNER

There is also an invitation to the Forty-fourth Annual Lincoln Dinner National Republican Club, February 12, 1930. Hotel Astor, New York City, New York.



The Lincoln Statue
In Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D. C.

President Lincoln appointed my father as Cashier of Customs at New Orleans. When my parents left for New Orleans, my sister and I were placed in the care of Reverend and Mrs. Adam Johnston.

W. T. Crawford, my father-in-law, was an early client of Lincoln's. When he went to Springfield to consult with him about his land entry and after Lincoln had given his advice, he said, "Mr. Lincoln, how much do I owe you?" Lincoln replied, "You are just a young fellow trying to get a start out here, aren't you?" Placing his hand on Crawford's shoulder he said, "Well, you just go along and I hope that you are successful in obtaining your land."

INDIAN AGENT

President Lincoln appointed Dr. Burleigh of Yankton, Dakota, as Sioux Indian agent and as he passed to the doctor his certificate of appointment he remarked, "Doctor, don't be too hard on the Indians."

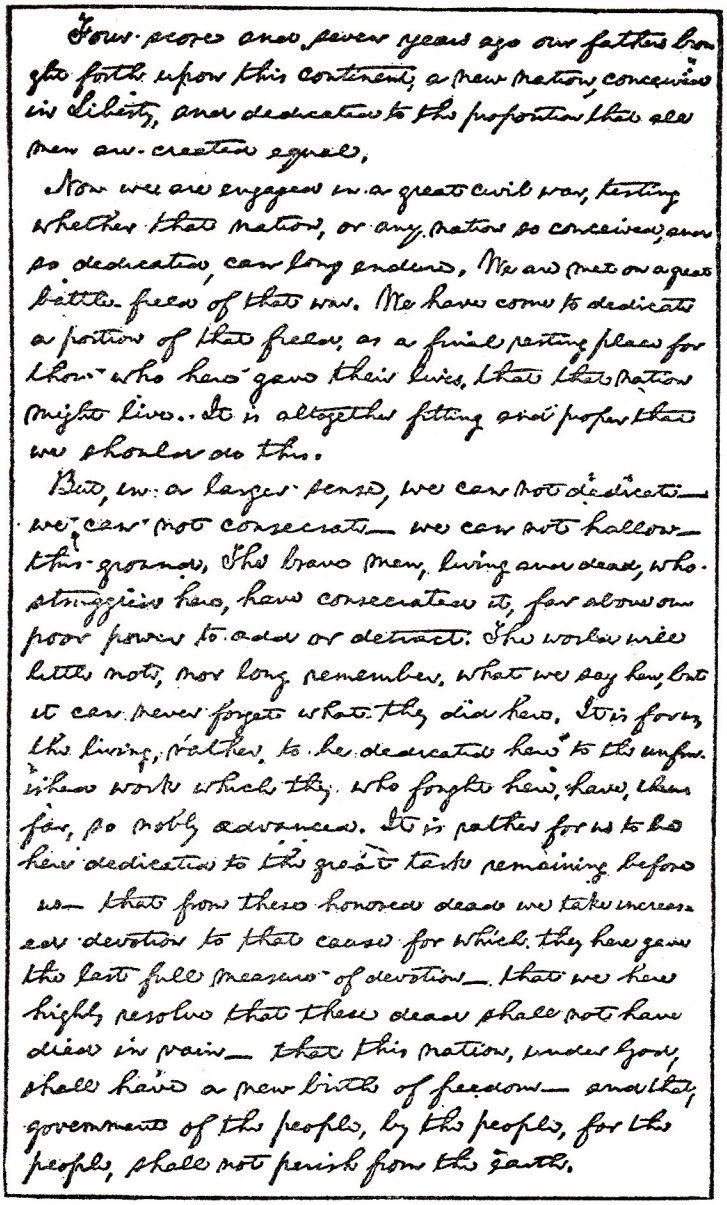
I knew Dr. Burleigh later on in Montana and, judging from his facial expression in later years, it seems to me that the president's caution to Dr. Burleigh was justified.

LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

Lincoln, standing on the battlefield of Gettysburg, made an address that has been called "a classic which will endure as long as the English language is spoken."

In connection with the G.A.R. I have placed in the Public Library at Salt Lake City, and in Weber

College at Ogden, a bronze placque mounted on marble of the Gettysburg Address which reads as follows:



Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal,

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives, that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate— we can not consecrate— we can not hallow— this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here, have thus far, so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us— that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion— that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain— that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom— and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.